



Bluebonnet *Electric* Cooperative, Inc.

Bastrop - Brenham - Giddings - Lockhart

P.O. Box 240 • Giddings, Texas 78942-0240 • (409) 542-3151 • FAX (409) 542-1187

July 19, 1994

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FCC MAIL ROOM

The Honorable Reed Hundt
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Rm. 814
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Cable Competition Report
CS Docket No. 94-48

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I am writing this letter in support of the Comments filed by the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC) in the matter of Implementation of Section 19 of the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992, Annual Assessment of the Status of Competition in the Market for the Delivery of Video Programming, CS Docket No. 94-48.

As a rural electric member of NRTC, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, Inc. is directly involved in the distribution of C-band satellite television programming to almost 50,000 rural consumers in Central Texas.

Currently, Bluebonnet pays significantly more for access to popular cable and broadcast programming for home satellite viewing than comparably sized cable companies in our area. The fact that we are forced to pay inflated rates for program access means higher prices for our members.

In addition, many of the members we serve live in remote areas not served by cable and receive poor quality off-air television. Since these consumers have limited choices for multichannel television programming other than satellite, they are forced to pay higher rates for access to television than their counterparts with access to cable.

We understood that, in the 1992 Cable Act, Congress had mandated that all distributors (cable, satellite and otherwise) should be granted equal access to cable and broadcast programming services

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at similar rates. If this is the case, why are we still paying more for many programming services than comparably sized cable companies? While it is true that some programmers have lowered their rates since the implementation of the 1992 Cable Act, our members deserve fair and equal access to all programming at rates comparable to those paid by cable or we will be unable to offer satellite television at prices acceptable to rural consumers.

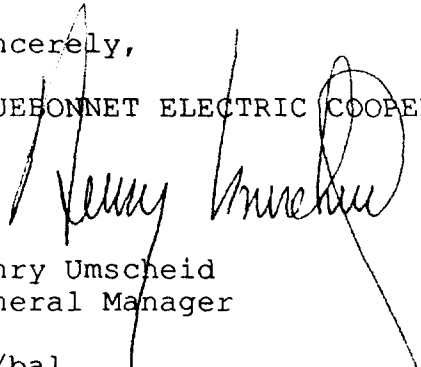
On this issue, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, Inc. joins NRTC in asking the FCC to monitor and alleviate the problems that I have mentioned above and to ensure that the intentions of Congress are being upheld with regard to the 1992 Cable Act.

Specifically, I feel that the FCC must prohibit abuses of the program access provisions of the 1992 Cable Act by rule and make it clear that damages will be awarded for program access violations.

I thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sincerely,

BLUEBONNET ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.



Henry Umscheid
General Manager

HU/bal

cc: ✓ Mr. William F. Caton
The Honorable James H. Quello
The Honorable Rachelle B. Chong
The Honorable Andrew C. Barrett
The Honorable Susan Ness
Ms. Joyce Welch



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The Honorable Greg Laughlin
United States Congressman
Room 236 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Laughlin:

I am writing this letter to join with NRTC in voicing a concern regarding the implementation and enforcement of Section 19 of the 1992 Cable Act by the Federal Communications Commission.

As a distributor of C-band satellite television programming, equal access to cable and broadcast programming at fair rates—something which we are not currently receiving—is essential for Bluebonnet to be competitive in our local marketplace. The attached letters to FCC Chairman Reed Hundt from myself, in addition to Rep. Billy Tauzin and other members of Congress, spell out my concerns on this issue.

I was under the impression that Congress had guaranteed equal access to cable and broadcast programming for all distributors with the passage of the 1992 Cable Act. Despite this fact, however, satellite distributors and consumers continue to pay higher programming fees than these in the cable industry.

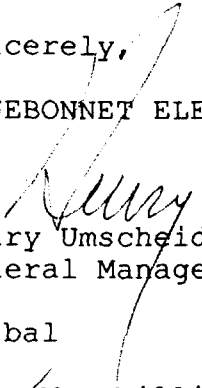
Some programmers continue to charge unfairly high rates for satellite distributors compared with cable rates. Other programmers—like Time Warner and Viacom—have simply refused to sell programming to some distributors. These exclusive practices hurt rural consumers and thwart the effective competition required by Section 19 of the Cable Act.

July 19, 1994

Your assistance on behalf of satellite television viewers in Central Texas in encouraging the FCC to correct this inequity would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

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~~The Honorable Phil Gramm
United States Senator
Room 370 Russell Building
Washington, DC 20510~~

Dear Senator Gramm:

I am writing this letter to join with NRTC in voicing a concern regarding the implementation and enforcement of Section 19 of the 1992 Cable Act by the Federal Communications Commission.

As a distributor of C-band satellite television programming, equal access to cable and broadcast programming at fair rates—something which we are not currently receiving—is essential for Bluebonnet to be competitive in our local marketplace. The attached letters to FCC Chairman Reed Hundt from myself, in addition to Rep. Billy Tauzin and other members of Congress, spell out my concerns on this issue.

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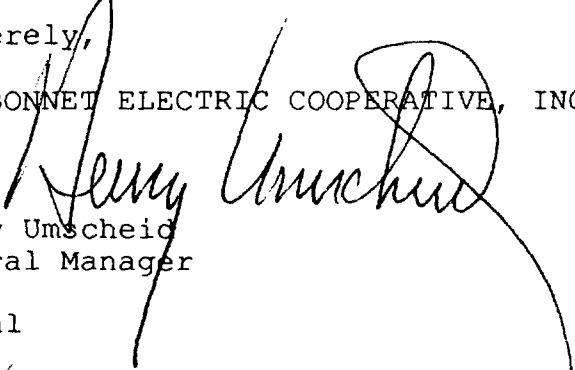
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~~The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
United States Senator
703 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510~~

Dear Senator Hutchison:

I am writing this letter to join with NRTC in voicing a concern regarding the implementation and enforcement of Section 19 of the 1992 Cable Act by the Federal Communications Commission.

As a distributor of C-band satellite television programming, equal access to cable and broadcast programming at fair rates—something which we are not currently receiving—is essential for Bluebonnet to be competitive in our local marketplace. The attached letters to FCC Chairman Reed Hundt from myself, in addition to Rep. Billy Tauzin and other members of Congress, spell out my concerns on this issue.

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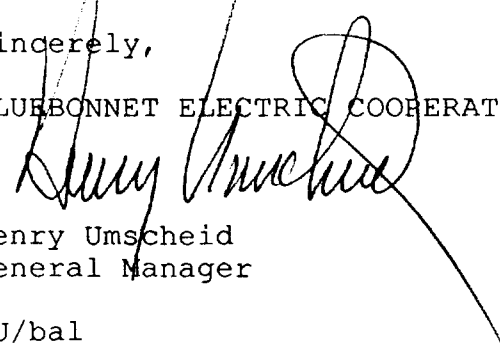
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